

Comprehensive Plan Workshop, March 3, 2011

Land Use Breakout Session

- As an indicator of growing diversity, Bedford schoolchildren speak 37 languages in their homes. But the town lacks the groups that used to welcome new residents, so we are losing our sense of community. **Need vibrant small gathering places that include restaurants, bakeries, and coffeehouses to reinforce community connections, especially among youth and families.**
- Middlesex Turnpike seems very corporate and doesn't feel "homey." Residents are cut off from the rest of the town, and lack gathering places. **The area needs a public park and a village center for both residents and people who work in nearby businesses.**
- **Use an overlay district to create "incubator zones" that foster small local businesses and entrepreneurs, such as for processing local food products.** Depot Park could be ideal for this—it's underused, and retail has been slow to materialize there.
- **Bedford also needs to encourage an arts area, such as the one now developing around the Common.** This area now includes Bedford Center for the Arts in Old Town Hall, an art gallery planned for a building two doors down, and a privately owned artist's studio planned for the Blake Block.
- **The Stop and Shop end of Great Road could use an overlay to spur the kinds of resident- and pedestrian-friendly development envisioned along other sections of Great Rd.** People were unanimously opposed to more drive-throughs, as they undermine this goal.
- **Bedford needs an Agricultural Committee, to devote land to agricultural use, find more space for community gardens, and encourage access to local food.** Use the land already acquired at the Princeton Properties site on Concord Rd. for this.
- **Use the built environment to produce alternative energy, such as wind and solar at the DPW landfill.**
- **Residents want more opportunities to hear about developments coming before the Planning Board, so they can attend meetings and provide input.** They want the department and residents to use social media for this, including list-servs,

Facebook, the existing Bedford Yahoo discussion group, and a new discussion group devoted specifically to planning issues.